Swift Transitions and Campus Movements:

An Analysis of Egyptian Student Movements During the Sadat Era

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Introduction

Anwar al-Sadat was President of Egypt between 1970 and 1981. This was a pivotal time for Egypt. Radical changes were instituted in economic, social, and foreign policy. During this period, the aftermath of severe blows to the pan-Arab dream manifested themselves in internal Egyptian politics. The period saw the highest levels of dissent ever seen in post-revolution Egypt. There were major threats to the Sadat regime from both leftists and Islamists. These groups, which voiced a post-revolution discontent with the direction of Egyptian politics, posed a constant threat to Sadat's regime. This widespread discontent culminated in Sadat's assassination by Islamists in 1981. A striking fact about the Egyptian radicals, especially the Islamists, is that the majority of them were university students or recent graduates. Considering this fact, it is surprising that more has not been written about the roots and causes of student discontent.

During the Sadat years, Egyptians saw a number of radical changes. Many of these policies had particularly profound effects on students. Some of the new policies that had the greatest effects on students were Sadat's economic and education policies. He expanded the higher education system, establishing new universities and integrating more students into them, especially those from rural and poorer backgrounds. At the same time, his economic policies introduced a more open, free market economy and removed some of Nasser's egalitarian economic policies. Additionally, Sadat's overtures towards Israel and the West were very offensive to many students. Sadat attempted, largely

unsuccessfully, to gain support for his agenda through powerful rhetoric and extreme policies, both of a reforming and of a repressive nature. However, many of these attempts, whether rhetorical flourishes justifying his policies or liberalizing reforms or foreign policy changes, did not resonate with students, and actually contributed to resentment of him on campuses.

While there are a number of books and articles about Sadat's far-ranging policy reforms, several on education in Egypt, and a wealth of material on the Islamist groups in the 1970s, few works look at the connections between these three important facets of Egypt in the Sadat era. There are a vast number of books about Sadat's policies. These books, taken as a whole, do a good job of chronicling Sadat's policy changes and provide clear accounts of the impetuses for Sadat's policies.[1] There is also a great deal written about Islamist movements

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[1] Ibrahim Ibrahim. "Religion and Politics Under Nasser and Sadat," in *The Islamic Impulse,* ed. Barbara Stowasser, 121-134 (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 121-134; John Waterbury, *The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat : The Political Economy of Two Regimes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); Raphael Israeli, *Man of Defiance: A Political Biography of Anwar Sadat* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985); Raymond William Baker, *Egypt's Uncertain Revolution Under Nasser and Sadat* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978); Mark N. Cooper, *The Transformation of Egypt* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1982); Raymond A. Hinnebusch, *Egyptian Politics Under Sadat: The Post-Populist Development of an Authoritarian-Modernizing State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); David Hirst and Irene Beeson, *Sadat* (London: Faber &Faber, 1981); Thomas W. Lippman, *Egypt After Nasser: Sadat, Peace, and the Mirage of Prosperity* (New York: Paragon House, 1989)

in Egypt. Some of these works link the movements in Egypt to movements throughout the Middle East, while others situate them in Egyptian history.[2]

Despite the large role students played on influencing revolutionary anti-regime movements during this period, there has been surprisingly little written about them. The most comprehensive accounts of student revolt in Egypt are Haggai Erlich's *Students and University in Twentieth Century Egypt* and Ahmed Abdalla's *The Student Movement and National Politics in Egypt*.[3] Erlich's book chronicles all of the student uprisings throughout the twentieth century. In this cogent account, Erlich does focus a great deal on aspects of Sadat that engendered student dissent. However, the focus of his book is always on the students, and he pays less attention to the effects of Sadat's specific policies on student life. Ahmed Abdalla, himself a leader of student movements during the Nasser years, also offers a comprehensive look on student protests and the effect of various government policies on students. However his account ends at 1973, with the leftist protests of that year, and does not cover the later Sadat years, when the Islamist student movement crystallized. Other accounts of

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[2] Saad Edin Ibrahim, "Egypt's Islamic Militants," *MERIP Reports* 103 (1982); Hamied N. Ansari, "The Islamic Militants in Egyptian Politics," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 16 (1984):123-144; John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1984); Giles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and Pharaoh*, trans. John Rothschild (London: Al Saqi Books, 1985); Martin S. Kramer, *Arab Awakening and Islamic Revival: The Politics of Ideas in the Middle East* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1996)

[3] Ahmed Abdalla, *The Student Movement and National Politics in Egypt* (London: Al Saqi Books, 1985); Haggai Erlich, *Students and University in Twentieth Century Egyptian Politics* (London: Frank Cass & Co, 1989)

student movements, such as those by Joseph Szliowicz and Bill Williamson, look at Egyptian student movements in comparative perspective.[4]

While all of these books help elucidate student politics in Egypt, they are fairly outdated and, with the exception of Erlich's account, pay inadequate attention to the aspects of Sadat's policies that affected students. This thesis will attempt to address this gap. I have consulted a number of sources, which look at Sadat's image, the political economic changes that he engendered, and the changes in university policy he implemented. I will look at how these policies differed from the Nasserist policies that preceded them, paying particular attention to the destabilizing effects of these transitions on students.

This paper will attempt to shed light on the reasons Sadat's policies and persona engendered such a large degree of dissent. In this thesis, I will argue that the rapid pace with which Sadat implemented sweeping policy changes had a destabilizing effect on university students. Consequently, many students were led to revolt against his regime. I will draw upon both theoretical and topical literature, and will focus particular attention on the effects of Sadat's economic and education policies on students.

In Part One, I will look at the events that happened prior to and during this period, that most effected the fermentation of the student movements. In Chapter One, I will outline some of the salient political developments of this era

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[4] Joseph Szylowicz, *Education and Modernization in the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973); Bill Williamson, *Education and Social Change in Egypt and Turkey: A Study in Historical Sociology* (Basingstoke, Hampshire : Macmillan Press, 1987)

and the decades preceding it. Understanding the tumultuous nature of Egyptian politics during the twentieth century is necessary if one is to understand the phenomena occurring during the Sadat period. In this chapter, I will pay particular attention to the transitions in the two decades prior to Sadat's assumption of the presidency, and to transitions that occurred during the Sadat years. In Chapter Two, I will give a history of the student movements in twentieth century, focusing especially on anti-regime student movements during the Sadat years.

In Part Two, I will look at ways that radical changes in university policy impacted the rise in discontent and anti-regime activity on university campuses in Egypt. In Chapter Three, I will explain the evolution of higher education in Egypt, from the establishment of the first university in Egypt in the early twentieth century to the rapid proliferation of universities and university students under Nasser and Sadat. In Chapter Four, I will look at links between the rapid pace of expansion, structural change, and demographic shifts in universities and the rise of militant groups on campuses.

In Part Three, I will turn my focus towards the effects of the changes in economic policy implemented by President Sadat. In Chapter Five, I will describe the changes entailed by Sadat's radical economic policy shifts, which he called "Infitah." In Chapter Six, I will discuss the impact of these changes on students, and how they catalyzed the formation of radical political movements.

Finally, in Part Four, I will look at the way Sadat portrayed himself and his image for clues to why he inspired so little support among students. In Chapter

Seven, I will analyze his speeches to paint a picture of how he presented himself and his policies, and in Chapter Eight, I will postulate on why this image failed to resonate with students.

In this analysis, I hope to elucidate an important period in Egyptian history, the reverberations of which are still felt in Egypt today. Furthermore, the case of Egypt has relevance for those analyzing other post-colonial countries undergoing rapid modernization. The case of Egypt during the Sadat era is an important one, and I hope to elucidate an important aspect of it heretofore under-researched with this study.

Part I: Transitions and Upheavals in Twentieth-Century Egypt

Chapter 1: Upheaval In Every Generation

Egypt's latest revolution has been shocking to many, but it less surprising when considered in light of its tumultuous history. Egypt has seen large-scale uprisings in nearly every generation. In light of these events, never has the time been riper to examine an earlier period during which different segments of Egyptian segments of society took to the streets, during the Sadat era.

It is important to understand Egypt's history of tumult if one is to analyze any one revolution or uprising. During the twentieth century in particular, there were a number of wars, two revolutions, and innumerable instances of riots and popular upheaval. The century was marked by constant pendulum swings in its economic, foreign, and social policy. The century can be roughly divided into four distinct periods. During the first period, from before the century's beginning until 1922, Egypt was officially under British control. The second period, from 1922 until 1952, saw Egypt as an officially independent constitutional monarchy. However, British influence over Egyptian political affairs lingered. In 1952, the twentieth century's second Egyptian revolution took place, and the British were forced out. Gamel Abdel Nasser eventually became president in 1954, and ushered in a period of Arab Socialism. In 1970, Anwar Al-Sadat assumed the presidency and changed the course of Egyptian policy dramatically from its shape under Nasser. Sadat's new policies set the stage for the fourth period, which was marked by an open door economic policy and a turn towards the West (which has been largely continued by his recently ousted successor Hosni Mubarak). This last period is the period I will be focusing most upon. However, in

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order to understand the developments that took place during this period, it is necessary to understand the destabilizing political, social, and economic developments that took place in the periods preceding it.

Egypt has had a checkered past and has seen a number of rulers and occupiers. In 1517, the Ottoman Empire conquered Egypt. Prior to this invasion, Egypt was ruled by Mamluks, warrior-leaders with massive influence over all affairs. However, the Ottoman Empire had difficulties reigning in the influence of the Mamluks. Egypt was thus under semi-autonomous Mamluk rule until 1798, when Napoleon invaded and gained control over Egypt. Napoleon's control lasted until 1805. As a result of the invasion, a civil war broke out in Egypt between the Mamluks, the Ottomans, and the Albanian officers. It culminated with Mohammed Ali Pasha, an Albanian officer in the Ottoman army, asserting control over Egypt. However, Mohammed Ali, despite his connection with the Ottomans, ruled Egypt as a semi-independent state. After his death in 1849, his family members assumed power and continued to rule Egypt until the British invaded in 1882, and Egypt became a de facto British protectorate. It became an official British protectorate in 1914,because of World War I.[5]

The British faced tremendous challenges while they were occupying Egypt. There were a number of Egyptian political factions that were hostile to the British, the largest of which was the "Wafd," or Delegation, party. In 1919, the Wafd, led by Saad Zaghlul, demanded Egypt's independence at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. Demonstrations escalated and in 1922, there was a

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[5] M.W. Daly, ed. *The Cambridge History of Egypt: Modern Egypt from 1517 to the end of the twentieth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

revolution, after which the British declared Egypt's independence. A new constitution was drafted, and members of a new parliament were elected, with Saad Zaghlul as the prime minister of this parliament. However, the British-allied monarchy persisted, and British troops remained in the country. Egyptian activities against the British continued, and many of the factions such as the Socialists and the Muslim Brotherhood gained prominence. In 1952, a group of army officers known as the Free Officers staged a revolution, and expelled the British. This changed the course of Egyptian politics, introducing a new economic and political order.[6]

The Free Officers Revolution of 1952, of which both Sadat and Nasser were principal actors, ushered in a new era of independent Egypt. The first President after the revolution, Mohammed Neguib, took power in 1953. He was very weak, and was forced by Nasser to resign in 1954. Nasser was seen as the true face of the Revolution, and as a man who encapsulated all of its ideals. He took the regime in a radical new direction. He was the forefather of Arab Socialism, which encompassed egalitarian policies and a hostile stance towards the West.

Gamel Abdel Nasser was an ideologue with radical ideas about the new direction of Egypt. Nasser's ideology was that of Pan-Arab nationalism, which was marked by animosity towards the West and egalitarian policies in Egypt. [7] Nasser implemented a new foreign policy in which he increasingly shunned the

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[6] Joel Gordon, *Nasser's Blessed Movement: Egypt's Free Officers and the July Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 5-7
[7] Kirk J. Beattie, *Egypt During the Nasser Years: Ideology, Politics, and Civil Society* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994)

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West, forged closer ties with the Soviet Union, and took an increasingly
belligerent stance towards Israel. He nationalized the Suez Canal in 1956, which
provoked an invasion by England, France, and Israel. The war ended after the
United States and the United Nations intervened.[8] During his reign, Nasser also
implemented a number of egalitarian income redistribution measures. Despite
his egalitarianism, he allowed few liberties, and took a number of measures to
consolidate his political support, especially on university campuses. [9] University
enrollment dramatically expanded under Nasser, and he implemented a number
of Socialist Unions in order to cement his hold over campus politics.

Throughout most of Nasser's rule, there was very little dissent. However,
this changed after 1967. In 1967, Nasser, along with other Arab leaders, waged
a war against Israel. This was seen as the pinnacle of his Pan-Arab ideology.
However, Israel defeated the Arab armies, and gained control of Egypt's Sinai
Peninsula, as well as the Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, and West Bank. This
defeat was demoralizing for Egyptians, and dealt a severe blow to Nasserism.[10]
As a result of the defeat, Nasser was considerably weakened. In 1968, he faced
the first major challenges to his rule, when massive student riots broke out in

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[8] John Waterbury, *The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat: The Political Economy of Two Regimes.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 433

[9] Joseph Szyliowicz, *Education and Modernization in the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), 253

[10] For more about the effects of the 1967 War on the ideology of Arab Socialism trumpeted by Nasser, see Fuad Ajami, *The Arab Predicament: Arab Political Thought and Practice Since 1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) and Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

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February and November of that year.[11] A considerably weakened Nasser died two years later, in 1970.

Anwar Al-Sadat inherited the presidency in 1970. Sadat had been Nasser's vice-president, and was another one of the leaders of the Free Officers Revolution. Initially, Sadat was seen as a weaker version of Nasser.[12] He suffered under the long shadow of Nasser's legacy, and inherited a re-politicized student body. There were student riots in 1972 and 1973.[13] In October of 1973, Sadat waged war against Israel in an attempt to win back the Sinai Peninsula. While he failed to do so, his people mostly viewed Egypt as the victor in this war. As such, he gained a wider base of support. Sadat harnessed this support in order to implement new, wide-ranging policy changes. He moved further from the Soviet Union and closer to the West, and began to take steps towards forging peace with Israel.[14] He removed many of the egalitarian measures put in place by Nasser.[15] He implemented his economic policy, which he dubbed "Infitah." This included austerity measures, privatization, incentives for foreign investment, and a removal of many of the income redistribution measures.[16] I will detail these changes in the next section.

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[11] Giles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and Pharaoh*, trans. John Rothschild (London: Al Saqi Books, 1985), 130-132

[12] Doreen Kays, *Frogs and Scorpions: Egypt, Sadat, and the Media* (London: Frederick Muller Limited, 1984), 252

[13] Ahmed Abdalla, *The Student Movement and National Politics in Egypt* (London: Al Saqi Books, 1985), 197-211

[14] Waterbury, *The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat*, 124

[15] Hamid Ansari, *Egypt: The Stalled Society* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1986), 13-14

[16] Waterbury, *The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat*, 146-156

Sadat's post-war popularity jump did not last. As early as 1974, there were disturbances initiated by disenchanted citizens. In 1974, the Islamic Liberation Organization took over the Military Technical College when Sadat was scheduled to speak, in a failed attempt at a coup d'état.[17] In the years after, there were a number of smaller-scale disturbances, and support for Islamist opposition groups grew, especially on university campuses.[18]

The year 1977 was extremely pivotal in Egypt's political history. Sadat visited Jerusalem, and announced that he would eliminate subsidies on common consumer products, at the urging of the International Monetary Fund. In response to this announcement, Sadat faced what was arguably the largest uprising of his presidency with the Bread Riots. Leftist groups of workers from Alexandria and Helwan started the riots, and soon after a variety of Egyptians joined in across the country. A number of students from across the political spectrum participated in these riots. Seventy-nine people were killed, over eight hundred were wounded, and 1,250 people were arrested.[19] While the Bread Riots were successful in halting the subsidy elimination, the opposition, much of which was spearheaded by university students, continued to mount throughout the remainder of Sadat's reign. It culminated in his assassination by Islamists in 1981.

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[17] Lewis J. Cantori, "Religion and Politics in Egypt," in *Religion and Politics in the Middle East,* ed. Michael Curtis (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981), 77-90
[18] Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Egypt's Islamic Militants," *MERIP Reports* 103 (1982), 5-14
[19] Haggai Erlich, *Students and University in Twentieth Century Egyptian Politics* (London: Frank Cass & Co, 1989), 216-217

Chapter 2: Dissent on Campuses

From the inception of the university, students were extremely politically aware and active. This is unsurprising considering the terminally volatile political situation in Egypt, and the desperate situation of many students, who lacked adequate job prospects. Students have played an important role in determining the political outcome of various leaders, and these leaders have subsequently attempted to use them as a political instrument.

From the inception of the first university in 1908, students have been extremely politically active, and have had the ability to sway politics and the outcome of parties and policies. Indeed, students played a major role in forcing the British to grant Egypt its limited independence in 1922.[20] Some of the most active factions on campus during the 1920s were the Wafdists, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Young Egypt group, and the Communists.[21] These groups were highly organized and active. These groups, and other smaller groups, would recruit and pay student leaders to mobilize students to serve their national agendas.[22] Students played a major role in Egyptian politics during this period, and played a significant role in the 1952 Revolution led by the Free Officers.

After the Revolution, there was a long period of quiet on university campuses. From 1954-1968, there were no student demonstrations.[23] This was partly a consequence of Nasser's strict discipline and tight grip over campus politics, but also a reflection of the political situation in Egypt. Students had

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[20] Erlich, 56
[21] Abdalla, 43-57
[22] Abdalla, 43-57
[23] Erlich, 171

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played a large role in forcing the British out of Egypt, and mostly were very supportive of Nasser and Arab Socialism. However, this calm was ruptured in 1968, in the aftermath of Egypt's defeat in the 1967 Six-Day War. The war, in which Israel defeated the combined forces of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, was a significant blow to the ideals of pan-Arabism upon which Nasserism was predicated. The defeat consequently diminished Nasser's standing and weakened him considerably. The post-war disillusionment of the masses manifested itself in the student riots of 1968. The first round of riots, in February, were led by leftist students who demanded more democratic rule, more freedoms, and less repressions.[24] In November of 1968, another student riot took place, in which the students echoed some of the same grievances of the February riots.[25] These riots marked the end of Nasser's reign, and the beginning of a new wave of student discontent and activism, which changed the political climate at universities for years to come.

Anwar Al Sadat assumed the presidency of Egypt in 1970, and faced an already politicized student body. For the entirety of his reign, Sadat faced opposition from different sectors of students. From the time he took power in 1971, until the October War in 1973, leftist students posed the main threat to him. For the two years after the October War, Sadat enjoyed relative quiet on campus due to Egypt's perceived victory in this war. Still, in 1974, there were some beginning harbingers of the Islamist surge that was coming. By 1976, the

[24]Giles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and Pharaoh*, trans. John Rothschild (London: Al Saqi Books, 1985), 130-132

[25] Abdalla, 172-175

Islamist presence on campuses was quite strong.[26] While Sadat had initially

believed that the students would be enthusiastic allies in his plans to take Egypt

in a new direction, he faced a politicized student body that constantly ridiculed,

distrusted, and resented him.[27]

From the moment Sadat took power, there was a growing tide of leftist

political activism on campus, and this tide only grew during the first years of his

reign.[28] Sadat's pro-Western, pragmatic approach to policy was unappealing to

these students, as was his paternalistic manner of addressing them.[29] They

mocked and attacked Sadat in wall magazines, and during discussions at

meetings and social and cultural events organized by various campus societies.[30]

The opposition boiled over in the student uprising of January 1972.[31] It was

sparked by Sadat's speech on January 13, 1972, in which he attributed his

unwillingness to go to war with Israel to the outbreak of the Indo-Pakistani War.

He claimed that having two ongoing wars would compromise the ability of the

Soviet Union to aid Egypt, and that the United States might intervene. Students

were unimpressed by this reasoning. The *Times* correspondent in Egypt

remarked, "Even the most ardent supporter of President Sadat will admit that his

excuse….[for] cancellation of a planned December attack into Sinai was a

tactical blunder…It carried an anxious and impatient audience beyond toleration

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[26] Erlich, 199-225
[27] Abdalla, 176
[28] Abdalla, 176
[29] Erlich, 200
[30] Abdalla, 178
[31] Abdalla, 178

point."[32] Rioting ensued, and lasted for eleven days. There was a four-day sit-in

on the Cairo University campus, in which students aggressively mocked Sadat.

On January 19, 1972, students formulated a list of demands, which were: the

rejection of political solutions to conflict with Israel; withdrawal from the Egyptian

acceptance of UN resolution 242; affording full support to the PLO; the

nationalization of American companies working in Egypt; elimination of foreign

tourism in Egypt; the institution of an egalitarian salary system; separating

Egypt's economy from "the market of international capitalism," and that Sadat

must report immediately to campus to explain his policy positions.[33] After

January 19th, the riots escalated for five days, and twenty thousand students

rioted in Cairo, vandalizing Western-associated properties and blocking major

city centers. Hundreds were injured and detained.[34] Sadat attempted to ignore

the riots, and to treat them as an isolated incident incited by a fringe group of

radicals. In his memoirs, he dismissed them as the result of the Communists

attempting to cause a disturbance via a small group of campus leftists.[35]

However, his Minister of War General Sadiq reported to him that there was a

strong level of support for the rioting students in the military, so he was forced to

take action. The next day, student leaders at Cairo University were arrested, and

students attempting to demonstrate faced police and army units.[36] For the rest of

1972, there was relative quiet. In the beginning of the 1972-1973 school year,

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[32] Abdalla, 178
[33] Erlich, 208-209
[34] Erlich, 209
[35] Anwar al Sadat, *In Search of Identity: An Autobiography* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 245
[36] Erlich, 210

leftist students attempted to take over the campus. However, Islamist students acting with government encouragement inhibited them from succeeding in doing so.[37] The leftist opposition was still strong, though, and on the anniversary of the 1972 riots, there was another, much smaller student riot, which lasted from January 2nd-January 3rd 1973.[38] The atmosphere was heated, and on-campus discussions and wall magazines reflected the high tenor of anti-Sadat sentiment.[39] However, student activism in the 1973-1974 school year had no opportunity to commence, because Sadat began to wage the October War against Israel in October 1973.

For the two years following the October War, there was relative quiet on campuses. Many student leaders praised Sadat, and Sadat subsequently allowed the student unions to repoliticize at the end of the 1974-1975 school year.[40] However, the radical leftist element was still strong on campuses, and, significantly, the Islamist students' influence on campuses grew, both on campuses and throughout out the country. In 1974, several months after the conclusion of the October War, an Islamist group, the Islamic Liberation Organization, attempted to stage a coup d'etat, and did manage to take over the Military Technical College when Sadat was scheduled to speak.[41] Between 1975

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[37] Erlich, 212
[38] Erlich, 212
[39] Abdalla, 197-211
[40] Erlich, 212
[41] Lewis J. Cantori, "Religion and Politic in Egypt," in *Religion and Politics in the Middle East,* ed. Michael Curtis (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981), 77-90

and 1979, Islamist influence on campus grew significantly, with Islamists winning landslide victories in student union elections. [42]

In 1977, the Food Riots, the most violent outburst seen in post-revolutionary Egypt, occurred. Both leftist and Islamist students participated in these riots. They erupted after the announcement of new budget regulations, including a significant reduction of food subsidies.. Leftist groups of workers from Alexandria and Helwan started the riots, and soon after a variety of Egyptians, from all over the country, including many students, joined in. Seventy-nine people were killed, over eight hundred were wounded, and 1,250 people were arrested.

In the aftermath of the Food Riots, Sadat cracked down on the student participants, particularly leftists.[43] As a result, Islamist students gained even more influence on campus.[44] In 1977, Sadat visited Jerusalem, which was a sharp provocation to these students. In the period between 1978-1981, there were hundreds of Islamist-inspired disturbances initiated by fundamentalist campus jama'at groups.[45] Some of these involved violent intervention on campuses to insure a more Islamic campus culture. In 1979, one of the jama'at groups in Asyut succeeded in segregating the sexes in lectures. One student reported on the groups' activities, as such, "They have denied fundamental rights to university students. They have used violence against those who disagreed with them (i.e., beating any male student caught talking with a female

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[42] Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Egypt's Islamic Militants," *MERIP Reports* 103 (1982), 5-14
[43] Erlich, 216-217
[44] Erlich, 221-223
[45] Erlich, 223

student)....They began to use direct force, such as attacking video stores which they believed were selling indecent films. They have used weapons, including knives and cleavers, in confronting the police."[46] In addition to these smaller scale incidents, there were some large-scale disturbances initiated by the campus *jama'at.* One such event took place at the beginning of the academic year at the University of Asyut in November 1980. Tensions were high because of student unions elections and new, harsher admissions policies. Violent riots ensued, in which rioters molested workers. On November 22, 1980, Sadat issued a decree to the students to stop rioting, and arrested a number of students. Still, it took one week, until November 29, 1980, to restore peace.[47] Incidents such as these were part of a larger, national phenomenon, in which Egyptians increasingly embraced traditional Islam and rejected Sadat's pro-Western policies and overtures towards Israel. This discontent culminated with Sadat's assassination on October 6, 1981.

The Sadat era saw unprecedented levels of campus activism, even in a country with as rich a history of activism as Egypt. Additionally, students during the Sadat era were unusually militant in their activism. In the forthcoming chapters, I will look at some of the reasons that these transitions that took place during the Sadat era resulted in the groundswell of anti-regime activism on campuses.

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[46] Barry Rubin, *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), 66
[47] Erlich, 222-223

Part II:
University Policy Shifts and Campus Dissent

Chapter 3: Changes in University Policy: 1908-1981

During the twentieth century, higher education in Egypt underwent extraordinary changes. At the start of the century, there was no secular university in Egypt. The first half of the century saw the first university's establishment and the opening of two other universities. However, university education was solely for the elite until the Free Officers Revolution. During this period, Nasser and Sadat implemented changes that caused the proliferation of universities and students. The period between 1952 and Sadat's assassination and 1981 saw exponential rises in university enrollment and precipitous changes in university structure and policies. The changes that took place during the twentieth century demand to be examined if one wants to understand the destabilizing campus uprisings that occurred during the Sadat era.

Prior to 1908, higher education in Egypt was extremely limited. It solely consisted of the religious institute Al-Azhar, which was founded in 975, and of several vocational faculties specializing in engineering, medicine, teaching, chemistry, minerals, language, and law. While the idea to establish a modern, Western-modeled university in Egypt was first proposed in 1894, the inauguration of the "Egyptian University" did not take place until December 22, 1908.[48] It was delayed because the competing agendas and visions of policymakers and those in power.[49] Even after 1908, the university was what Haggai Erlich calls a "non-university." The Schools of Law, Engineering, Medicine, and Teaching were

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[48] Haggai Erlich, *Students and University in Twentieth Century Egyptian Politics* (London: Frank Cass & Co, 1989), 9-11
[49] Erlich, 10-34

government controlled and not part of the liberal arts-oriented "Egyptian University." Egypt's King Fuad, who had spearheaded the education initiative, made no attempt to integrate these faculties into one institution, for he was more interested in appearing progressive to Western observers than he was in fostering liberal thought and scholarship in Egypt.[50] Enrollment was extremely limited in these first years of the university. In 1908, enrollment reached 754, and in the years after, it declined. In 1920 and 1921, it reached a low of 21.[51] Thus, during this period, the university was primarily an instrument to bolster Egypt's image abroad, and played little to no role in Egyptian politics and society.

This changed in 1925. Great Britain declared Egypt independent in 1922, after massive uprisings. A constitution was drafted in 1923, and Saad Zaghlul was elected as Egypt's Prime Minister in 1923. King Fuad subsequently had a heightened interest in gaining power over his political rivals, and he saw the university as instrumental to this goal. He aimed to deny his rivals of the benefits of being associated with the university's development.[52] Thus, he collaborated with the French, who were eager for the opportunity to increase their relative influence in Egypt, to create a French-oriented university to replace the "Egyptian University." This new university had faculties of humanities, medicine, law, and science. It adopted the French-continental approach to scholarship, which emphasized theory, and instruction was in French.[53] The esoteric theories in a foreign language were difficult for many of the Egyptian students to understand,

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[50] Erlich, 34-35
[51] Erlich, 25
[52] Erlich, 27
[53] Erlich, 27-40

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and had little correlation with the socio-economic needs of Egypt. Nevertheless, in the years thereafter, enrollment swelled. In 1930, enrollment reached 4,247, and by 1952, enrollment had increased to 42,444 students.[54] During this period, two more universities, Alexandria University (in 1942) and Ain Shams University (in 1950), were established. [55]

The Revolution led by the Free Officers in 1952 ushered in a completely new era for Egypt. The new leaders strove to rapidly bring about a period of modernity and equity, and universities were considered an important instrument of these goals. Gamel Abdel Nasser assumed the presidency in 1954, and he made it his top priority to reduce income disparity and promote equal opportunities for all. [56] Nasser put into practice the ideals outlined in the 1956 Constitution, which declared that sovereignty belongs to the "people," through his higher education policies.[57] In 1962, he abolished all university fees.[58] This greatly increased the number of students who were able to attend university. In the 1952-3 school year, there were 42,485 students enrolled in university, and in the 1962-1963 school year, this figure had more than doubled, to 98,537.[59] By the last year of Nasser's reign, in 1969, there were 139,552 university students.[60]

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[54] Ahmed Abdalla, *The Student Movement and National Politics in Egypt* (London: Al Saqi Books, 1985), 26

[55] Georgie Hyde, *Education in Modern Egypt :Ideals and Realities* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 4

[56] Bill Williamson, *Education and Social Change in Egypt and Turkey : A Study in Historical Sociology* (Basingstoke, Hampshire : Macmillan Press, c1987), 116

[57] Hyde, 6

[58] Williamson, 173

[59] Erlich, 177

[60] Joseph S. Szyliowicz, *Education and Modernization in the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), 281

During Nasser's reign, two new institutions of higher learning, the Military Technical College and Assuit University, were established. Nasser also dramatically increased the governmental higher education budget. In the 1952-3 year, the budget allocated to higher education was 3,541,000 Egyptian pounds, and by 1962-1963, this figure had increased to 14,500,000 Egyptian pounds. Nasser provided a number of incentives for university students, including inexpensive transportation and movie tickets, subsidized university housing, and exemptions from military service.[61] These developments made education seem appealing and accessible for many to whom it had not been an option, and resulted in far-reaching changes in university life and Egyptian society.

Nasser instituted these reforms not only because they fit into his egalitarian vision and were politically popular, but because he saw the university as a valuable tool for promoting the tenants of Arab Socialism. Nasser aimed to legitimize his rule by institutionalizing his support within the centers of the future elite, the universities.[62] He thus implemented strict governmental control of the universities, which heretofore had not existed. One instrument of this control was the Ministry of Higher Education, which he formed in 1961.[63] In 1961, he also transferred control of the ancient religious institute Al-Azhar from clerics to government officials, transforming it to a public university like the others in the university system.[64] Nasser facilitated the organization of students in Arab Nationalist Committees, in order for them to serve as liaisons between the

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[61] Erlich, 177
[62] Szyliowicz, 253
[63] Erlich, 179
[64] Szyliowicz, 282-283

establishment and the masses. The student-faculty unions of the old regime, which had been elected by party, were abolished and replaced with unions elected by students and faculty in which the faculty would guide the students, in the 1954-1955 school year. The members of these university unions, along with members of the unions of other institutes of higher education, elected members for the National Student Union, which was comprised of students, graduates, and faculty. The National Student Union was later reorganized as the Arab Socialist Union. In addition to the Arab Socialist Union, there were also the youth wings of the political organizations of the regime, such as the Youth Bureau of the Liberation Rally and the National Union.[65] Not only did these groups further the regime's goals, but they neutralized the students as a potentially disruptive political force by giving them regime-approved outlets for political participation.

Following Nasser's death in 1970, his vice president, Anwar Al Sadat, assumed the presidency. While Sadat was initially viewed as a weaker version of Nasser, he soon proved that he was his own man, and departed significantly from the tenants of Nasserism.[66] In 1971, he embarked on what he deemed the "corrective revolution," in which he reversed many of Nasser's policies and removed from government and jailed many Nasser loyalists. He instituted a new policy of openness, or "Infitah," and announced that he would put an end to police harassment, wire tapping, and mail surveillance.[67] He released a number of political prisoners, including many prominent Muslim Brotherhood members,

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[65] Erlich, 183-4
[66] Erlich, 199
[67] John Waterbury, *The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat: The Political Economy of Two Regimes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 349-353

whom had been imprisoned during the Nasser era. His economic policy reflected this new openness ad departure from Nasserism. Sadat moved Egypt away from the Soviet Union, and towards the West, and advocated free trade and private ventures.[68]

Like Nasser, Sadat viewed universities as both a microcosm in which to test out his ideals and as a potentially valuable instrument for supporting his policy goals. However, his vision for the universities departed dramatically from that of Nasser. He practiced his "Infitah" in the universities, and permitted many more freedoms on campuses than Nasser did.[69] He attempted to thwart Nasserism on campuses by undermining campus networks of Nasserites, which he called "centers of power," by dismissing some of their leading members and by re-politicizing student unions, to which the centers answered. He also encouraged the militarization of campuses, with aggressive recruitment efforts aimed at mobilizing for the October War. These efforts were largely successful, and in early 1972, eighty percent of students who had graduated in 1971 were in the military.[70] In addition to these policies, Sadat practiced his policy of openness vis-à-vis the university by opening up higher education even further than Nasser had opened it. Sadat attempted to encourage more lower class and provincial Egyptians to go to university by expanding enrollment in existing universities and opening up new universities in the provinces outside of Cairo and Alexandria. In early 1971, right after he took power, Sadat ordered the

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[68] Waterbury, 159
[69] Erlich, 201
[70] Erlich, 206

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acceptance of nearly all secondary certificate holders to universities and higher institutes. Secondary graduates with averages as low as 50% were admitted to universities.[71] By 1977, he had opened new universities in Zaqaziq, Hilwan, Tanta, Mansura, Minufiyya, Minya, and the Canal University, by the Suez Canal.[72] The number of university students increased exponentially throughout Sadat's reign. In the 1970-1971 school year, there were 177,955 students, and two years later, during the 1972-73 school year, there were 334,000 students in Egypt. By 1980-1981, the last year of Sadat's rule, there were 563,750 university students.[73] Sadat believed that this influx of new students would dilute the influence of the leftist Nasserite university students by introducing more rural, poorer students, who were more likely to be devout Muslims. While he was in many respects correct, this did not forestall him from facing opposition from students during his regime. In the next chapter, I will look at why the sweeping changes in university structure, demographics, and enrollment precipitated the rise in campus militancy during the Sadat regime.

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[71] Erlich, 203
[72] Erlich, 204
[73] Erlcih, 202

Chapter 4: Educational Policy and Campus Dissent

Nasser and Sadat's massive efforts to promote egalitarianism and modernization by increasing access to higher education were, in many ways, very successful. Higher education opportunities suddenly became plentiful for hundreds of thousands of Egyptians to whom they previously had been unthinkable. However, the swell in numbers and changes in demographics caused a number of problems, and undoubtedly played a role in the resurgence of militant Islamist groups on campuses. Some of these problems were that the university infrastructure was ill-equipped to support the massive influx of students, that poorer students faced obstacles, even with the revocation of university fees, and that the economy could not support the large numbers of university graduates.

Expanding the university system so swiftly and dramatically resulted in a decline in both admissions standards and academic quality of the universities. Some of these new students, who, as previously mentioned, had secondary school averages as low as 50%, were inadequately equipped for university study. Furthermore, candidates to the universities are placed in specific departments in the university based on their secondary certificate scores, with medicine, engineering, and the applied sciences being more exclusive, and the humanities less exclusive.[74] This system is problematic for two principal reasons. Firstly, many of the students admitted to humanities departments with scores of 50% are inadequately prepared for university study. Secondly, this system places

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[74] Hyde, 120-121

students in a department, and thus on a career track, based not on their interest in the subject matter but on their exam scores. Many students were studying for a career track in which they had little or no interest. Large numbers of students that wanted to study in the more selective faculties of medicine, science, engineering, and agriculture, were not able to study these subjects, and many students in the less selective fields of social sciences and humanities had not desired to study these subjects.[75] The less selective faculties received less funding, worse students, and less attention, and were thus called "garbage faculties" by Egyptian students.[76] As a result of these admissions policies, many students were unprepared for university, relegated to severely underfunded faculties, or uninterested in their field of study. Hence, it is hardly surprising that many of these students became disillusioned and found an outlet in radicalism.

Augmenting this student dissatisfaction was the fact that, as a byproduct of the university system's rapid expansion, resources were strained and the academic quality of universities declined. This was nearly unavoidable, as expansion happened so rapidly. Studies throughout the developing world have shown that this is a common pitfall that plagues education planners. Rapid university expansion often leads to a decline in academic standards in the developing world, as it certainly did in Egypt.[77] In Egypt in the 1970s, students

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[75] George Psacharopoulos and Vikas C. Sanyal, *Higher Education and Employment: The IIEP Experience in Five Less Developed Countries* (Paris: Unesco, International Institute for Educational Planning, 1981), 54
[76] Kepel, 137
[77] Archibald Calloway, *Education Planning and Unemployed Youth* (Paris: Unesco, International Institute for Educational Planning, 1981), 11-21

referred to the university as a "university of large numbers."[78] Professor to

student ratios surged. A 1977 study conducted by Ruz al-Yusef reported that in

some faculties, the professor to student ratio was as high as 666:1.[79] As a result,

many professors had trouble handling their teaching loads, and lecture halls were

filled far past capacity. Furthermore, these overworked professors received very

low salaries, and were often forced to take on outside work to supplement their

meager incomes.[80] Lecture halls were precariously overcrowded, and

sometimes up to three students were forced to share a seat.[81] A member of the

medical faculty reported that "students do not see, cannot hear, and therefore do

not learn."[82] Not only did this state of affairs make learning difficult, but it

threatened the modesty of the female students and the values of the male

students. These circumstances undoubtedly engendered severe psychological

repercussions among many of the students.

Further hindering the academic experience of Egyptian university students

was the curriculum, which only allowed for narrow courses of study and stressed

memorization as the main means of learning.[83] Student surveys taken during

this era show evidence of extreme student dissatisfaction with the university

experience. Sixty-three percent of students considered higher education to be

"on the verge of collapse." One survey showed that only 27.2 percent of

students reported genuine interest in their course of study, and only 12.8 percent

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[78] Kepel, 136
[79] Erlich, 203
[80] Williamson, 182
[81] Kepel, 136-137
[82] Erlich, 204
[83] Rubin, 166

thought that universities were capable of creating conscious and cultured generations, and just 18.4 percent said that universities respond to the real needs of society. A total of 82.8 percent said that universities needed improvement.[84] As such, students often searched for meaning outside of academics, in the realm of political activism.

The academic deficiencies of the universities created a host of problems for all Egyptian students, but these problems were especially pressing for the new, lower middle class university students. Students that wanted effective, personal instruction were forced to employ private tutors, which could be quite expensive.[85] Furthermore, most lessons were based on memorization from textbooks, which were scarce, outdated, and expensive.[86] This state of affairs made it difficult for even the most talented young people of the lower middle classes to receive effective educations. As a result, many of them grew disillusioned and alienated. Islamist groups were thus very tantalizing. They offered an appealingly traditional ideology and sense of belonging to their members, and an avenue for expressing anger and discontent. Perhaps more importantly, they made life easier for their members, by offering their members large (up to eighty percent) discounts on textbooks, lecture notes, and "Islamic" clothes.[87] As such, they were able to take advantage of the situation on campus in order to build their ranks.

[84] Abdalla, 221-222
[85] Erlich, 204
[86] Abdalla, 221
[87] Rubin, 65

Another socio-economic development brought about by the expansion of education was that there was no place in the Egyptian economy for many of these new recent graduates. This is another problem not exclusive to Egypt, but inherent in rapid educational expansion, particularly in the developing world. While expanding education is often intended to lower societal stratification and increase social mobility, it often has little effect on the reduction of stratification and results in large numbers of the educated and unemployed.[88] In Egypt, this was heightened by a lack of coordination in educational and economic planning, and little correspondence between the number of students accepted to certain faculties and the demand for the correlative jobs. The effect of education on the welfare of a society is contingent upon the ability of non-educational institutions to employ the skills of the graduates.[89] In Egypt, the economy was faltering, and most graduates relied upon the government to find them jobs, even in the prestigious faculties of medicine and engineering.[90] A 1981 study showed that the majority of Egyptian graduates who did find jobs did so with the government.[91] There were few prospects for most students, especially those with no connections, to find high paying, fulfilling work in Egypt. These students,

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[88] There are a number of studies on this. Some notable ones are: Randall Collins, *The Credential Society: An Historical Sociology of Education and Stratification* (New York: Academic Press, 1979); R. Poignant, *The Relation of Educational Plans to Economic and Social Planning* (Paris: Unesco, International Institute for Educational Planning, 1967); Torsten Husen, *Higher Education and Social Stratification: An International Comparative Study* (Paris: Unesco, International Institute for Educational Planning, 1987); C.A. Anderson, *The Social Context of Education Planning* (Paris: Unesco, International Institute for Educational Planning, 1967)
[89] Anderson, 32
[90] Abdalla, 223-224
[91] Psacharopoulos and Sanyal, 32

who had endured such hardships while attending university, were bound to become angry and disillusioned. Malcolm Kerr commented, even in the 1960s, before the surge in radical Islamist activity in Egypt, that the "explosive compound of the high aspirations and self-conscious dignity instilled by university education and the unpromising conditions of the job market...has made university students and graduates a continuing revolutionary force throughout the past half-century in Egypt."[92] In the 1970s, when there were more university students and graduates than ever before, the nation was undergoing dramatic political transformations, and the economy was struggling, it is little wonder that many of these students became involved in radical political movements.

The problematic nature of the university's academic shortcomings and the lack of prospects for graduates manifested itself in the Islamist surge partially because of the dramatic demographic changes in university students. The demographic changes occurred both because of the expansion of the university, which allowed more lower middle class Egyptians from the provinces to attend university, and because of conscious attempts by Sadat to court these students, who he believed would be an effective counterweight to the threat posed by leftists and Nasserites, who were more likely to be urban and middle-class. Many of the new students who were able to attend university because of these policy changes were the first members of their families to attend university, and were from the provinces outside of the major cities of Cairo and Alexandria. These students were generally very ambitious, and more conservative and

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[92] Malcolm H.Kerr, "Egypt," in *Education and Political Development*, ed. James S. Coleman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 187

religious than their urban, more affluent counterparts. Often, they believed that higher education was the key to upward mobility, status, and economic prosperity, and they became disillusioned when they arrived to campus and confronted with the stark economic and social realities. [93] When they moved to the cities to study, they were confronted with harsh conditions and often felt severely uprooted. These newly urbanized people formed the base of the Islamist groups. [94] As a result, some turned to Islamist groups. Saad Edin Ibrahim, an Egyptian intellectual who authored a study on Egyptian militant groups, observed that, "Most of them [fundamentalists] are educated. I would say that 90 percent of them are university students or university graduates— recent university graduates. They are young, tend to be in their 20's or early 30's. They are from lower middle classes—classes which have traditionally, at least in the fifties and sixties, thought of education as an avenue for upward mobility. Now they discover that education does not get them very far. They tend to come from rural backgrounds, small towns, and they tend to be among the higher achievers, the ones who become very sensitive when they realize that the rules of equity and equal opportunities are not really operating. And they discover that midway in their university career." [95] Indeed, a MERIP study of two of the main Islamist groups in Egypt, the Military Academy Group and Tafkir Wa Al Hijra, shows that young students and recent graduates from the rural, lower

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[93] Bradley James Cook, "Egyptian University Students: Religion, Change and the Politics of Protest," *Middle East Affairs Journal* V. 7 No. 1-2 (2001): 79-103

[94] Ibrahim Ibrahim, "Religion and Politics Under Nasser and Sadat," in *The Islamic Impulse*, ed. Barbara Stowasser (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 121-134

[95] Bradley James Cook, "Egyptian University Students: Religion, Change and the Politics of Protest," *Middle East Affairs Journal* V. 7 No. 1-2 (2001): 80-81

middle classes are highly represented in these groups. The majority of members of these groups were from villages and small towns, had fathers with no university education, and had moved without their families to Cairo and Alexandria.[96] These types of students were particularly prone to the aforementioned problems of financial difficulties, alienation, and disillusionment. Students from these backgrounds, whom Sadat had hoped would counter the threat posed by leftists, ironically ended up posing the greatest threat to his regime.

Another unintended by-product of the expansion of higher education in Egypt that may have resulted in an Islamist resurgence is the crisis of identity felt by many of the newly educated. In a study of the politics of education planning in developing countries, C.D. Rowley reports that, in post-colonial nations, increased levels of education can heighten unsettledness and contradictions in the minds of many about the clash between Western and traditional political and economic systems, with the result being ambivalence, heightened frustrations, and a sense of hopelessness when confronted with the vast gulf between aspirations and reality. [97] In Sadat-era Egypt, a post-colonial nation with a Western-oriented leader and massive economic problems, this phenomenon was particularly prevalent. Mahmud A. Faksh observed that the political culture of educated Egyptians is "marked by crisis of identity, ambivalence of attitudes, values, and beliefs not only toward the traditional order of society, but also

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[96] Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Egypt's Islamic Militants," *MERIP Reports* 103 (1982), 5-14.
[97] C.D. Rowley, *The Politics of Educational Panning in Developing Countries* (Paris: Unesco, International Institute for Educational Planning, 1971), 11-13

toward the new national order and the elite."[98] To many of the educated masses

of the Sadat era, particularly those from more traditional rural backgrounds,

confronted with the harshness of modernity for the first time at the university,

these feelings manifested themselves in a desire for familiarity and tradition.

Islamist groups were therefore the ideal outlet for them. They offered a

conservative, traditional ideology and philosophy, as well as a built-in supportive

community of students sharing the same feelings. Subsequently, the

membership numbers of these groups burgeoned during the Sadat era.

Thus, while the expansion of education undoubtedly benefitted many

sectors of the Egyptian population, it was also quite problematic. Higher

education expansion happened too quickly, educational resources were strained,

academic quality declined, and the ranks of the educated unemployed increased.

Additionally, university life forced many into new, unsettling situations that

affronted both their religious sensibilities and their overall wellbeing.

Consequently, there were large numbers of students with disappointed hopes,

especially among those newly upwardly mobile who were the first in their families

to attend university. These students were the ones most likely to turn to various

radical movements. This phenomenon is in no way restricted to Egypt.

Education is a tempting investment for a variety of leaders in both the developed

and developing worlds, as it is generally popular among the populace, and is a

long-term investment in the health and modernization of the economy. However,

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[98] Mahmud A. Faksh, "The Consequences of the introduction and Spread of Modern Education: Education and National Integration in Egypt," in *Modern Egypt: Studies in Politics and Society*, eds. Elie Kedourie and Sylvia G. Haim (London : F. Cass, 1980), 48

it is a riskier investment than it may seem. If the planning is hasty, investment in education could produce a lower return than investment in other forms of capital, and it could facilitate the spread of radicalism, which in developing countries can be destabilizing.[99]

Finally, another aspect of Sadat's university policy that may have influenced the surge of political activity on campus is his promotion of civil liberties on campuses. As previously mentioned, Nasser tightly controlled campus discourse. All campus organizations and the student union were part of his political apparatus, and supported Arab Socialism and his political goals. This method of curtailing political opposition was highly successful until 1968 when, in the aftermath of the Six-Day War, Nasser lost much of his strength and legitimacy. Sadat took an opposite approach to Nasser. He allowed many more campus freedoms, and re-politicized the student unions. While he believed these moves would undermine Nasserism and help him to curry favor with students, they ultimately backfired. As previously described, wall magazines mocked him, campus organizations rallied against him, and Islamist groups, whom he had previously encouraged as a counterweight to leftists, threatened his regime. In hindsight, it appears that Sadat was hasty and allowed too many freedoms on campuses. In North Africa, student unions are the most important variable in determining student activism.[100] Sadat made a risky gamble in allowing the student union to repoliticize, and it backfired. Of course, with so many other

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[99] See Collins; Maurice Levitas, *Marxist Perspectives in the Sociology of Education* (London : Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978); James S. Coleman, *Education and Political Development* (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1968)
[100] Erlich, 269

factors influencing student politics, Egyptian universities were a powder keg, and eruption was nearly inevitable. Iranian campus politics provides an example of a campus with very few political freedoms, where radical Islamist politics still flourished. Nevertheless, by allowing relative political freedom, Sadat removed one of the barriers to political unrest on campuses. This radicalism posed a constant threat to him throughout his regime, and culminated in his assassination. While most of the changes in university policy implemented by Sadat were well-intentioned, the rapid transition from lack of education to accessible education coupled with a lack of funds and infrastructure to support these numbers, as well as demographic shifts and increased liberties on campus proved excessively destabilizing.

Part III:
Radical Economic Transitions and University Students

Chapter 5: Sharp Economic Shifts: 1952-1981

Changes in university policy were not the only dramatic policy changes that affected students and hastened chaos on campuses. Sadat's Infitah was a sweeping change that completely altered the structure of the Egyptian economy, and changed the economic opportunity structure of many, including students. However, it was not the first radical economic change Egypt experienced during the twentieth century. In order to understand the destabilizing effect of Infitah on Egyptian students, it is important to understand not just what Infitah entailed, but the extent and frequency of sharp economic changes during the twentieth century. In this chapter, I will detail the changes in economic policy implemented in the twentieth century in Egypt, paying particular attention to the changes rendered by Infitah. I will look at the implications of the various changes on the Egyptian economy.

During the twentieth century, there were three distinct economic periods. The first period, from the period before the Free Officers Revolution in 1952, and for the first decade of the new regime, until 1962, was marked by a relatively open, but regulated capitalism.[101] The next period, from 1962 until 1973, comprising the second half of the reign of Nasser and the first few years of the reign of Sadat, was characterized by what came to be known as Arab Socialism. Many industries were nationalized, and protectionist policies and policies aimed

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[101] Raymond A. Hinnebusch, *Egyptian Politics Under Sadat: The Post-Populist Development of an Authoritarian-Modernizing State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 22

at eradicating income disparity were implemented.[102] The final period, comprising the remainder of Sadat's reign (and largely continuing until today) was the period of Infitah.

Prior to the Free Officers Revolution in 1952, Egypt's economy was a pre-industrial market system.[103] A few members of the Egyptian agrarian bourgeoisie owned most of the land in Egypt, while foreign businessmen owned the majority of industry. For example, Europeans owned most shipping enterprises, credit, and foreign trade.[104] There was sharp income disparity, with foreigners and the Egyptian landed bourgeoisie occupying the highest income bracket, and peasants and the urban working class and poor at the bottom. In the urban area, there was a moderate-sized middle class. This middle class was predominantly comprised of the petty bourgeoisie, which consisted of tradesmen, artisans, barbers, and other workmen, artisans, and people in the service industry, and of more educated white-collar employees, such as journalists, professors, and doctors.[105] During the Post-War period, cracks in the economic structure began to show. There was rampant corruption, debt, and urbanization. When the Free Officers staged the revolution, they were not originally aiming to implement a Socialist system, but to fix the structural inadequacies of the current capitalist system.[106]

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[102] Hinnebusch, 24
[103] Roberto Aliboni, et al., *Egypt's Economic Potential* (London: Routledge, 1984), 18
[104] Joel Beinin and Zachary Lockman, *Workers on the Nile: Nationalism, Communism, Islam and the Egyptian Working Class 1882-1954* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1998), 8-9
[105] Beinin and Lockman, 6-9
[106] Beinin and Lockman, 12

President Naguib was the first president after the Free Officers Revolution, and during the two years during which he ruled and during the first years of Nasser's rule, government in Egypt was a "national-populist dictatorship," which was supported by the United States.[107] From 1952 to 1956, the economy was largely in private hands, and the role of the State was relegated to managing infrastructure and social services. Foreign investment was still encouraged during this time, and foreigners often owned major interests in Egyptian companies.[108] Between 1957 and 1960, the State began to take a larger role in the economy. The first harbingers of Arab Socialism began to manifest during this period. Banks were nationalized, and several major foreign-owned industries were nationalized. Still, the economic system at this time was far from Socialism, and was closer to a regulated Capitalism.[109]

During the period comprising the remainder of the reign of Nasser, and the first few years of the reign of Sadat, between 1961 and 1973, Arab Socialism vastly altered Egypt's economic policy. Foreign policy conflicts with the West, such as the aforementioned Suez Crisis, and Egypt's rejection of World Bank austerity conditions accelerated the transition to a more statist economic policy. The open, capitalist economic policy began to seem increasingly at odds with the

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[107] Robert Vitalis, *When Capitalists Collide: Business Conflict and the End of Empire in Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 120
[108] Aliboni, 18-19
[109] Aliboni, 18-19

populist, nationalistic politics of the State. As such, Gamel Abdel Nasser embraced a modified Socialism, with backing from the Soviet Union.[110]

Nasser's Arab Socialism radically altered Egyptian economic policy. Banking, foreign trade, much internal trade, and many large and medium-sized industries were nationalized.[111] In addition, many sweeping populist changes aimed at narrowing gaps between the rich and poor were adopted. These included the elimination of all university fees, the guarantee of state employment for all university graduates, the expansion of employment in state firms, price controls and rent reductions, subsidies on many commodities, income caps, an extremely progressive income tax, and profit-sharing arrangements for workers.[112] These economic changes and dramatically altered the opportunity structure for many sectors of society. Subsidies and price controls especially made things easier for the nation's poorest, while free higher education and subsequent guaranteed employment in the State bureaucracy enabled many, for whom it had previously been unthinkable, to aspire to and attain middle class respectability.

These economic changes were initially a considerable boon to Egypt's economy. The Gross Domestic Product growth rate rose to ten percent in the years before the War of 1967.[113] However, preparation for the 1967 War against Israel and Egypt's subsequent defeat in this war slowed growth. In the years

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[110] R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Egypt Under Nasir: A Study in Political Dynamics* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1971), 22-24
[111] Dekmejian, 24
[112] Dekmejian, 24
[113] Aliboni, 19-21

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between the 1967 defeat and the 1973 October War against Israel, structural problems with the Egyptian economy began to manifest themselves. The bureaucracy became bloated and inefficient. The state-run industries, too, were inefficient and produced goods that were overpriced and inferior.[114] Because the Egyptian economy had turned inward, foreign capital froze up and Egypt was forced to deplete its own reserves.[115] These developments, in full force when Sadat took power in 1970, influenced Nasser's successor's conviction that his predecessor's economic policy had to be changed.

However, during the first few years of Sadat's rule, he was still in Nasser's shadow and cautious about making any sweeping economic policy changes. In these first years, Sadat began to take piecemeal steps towards forging a more open, capitalist economy. In September of 1971, he implemented Law 65, which secured foreign investments from confiscation and granted them tax-free status for a period of five years. In 1973, he expanded the range of legal uses for foreign currencies in Egypt.[116] After the October War of 1973, in which Egypt perceived itself as the victor, Sadat's popularity was at an unprecedented high. Thus, the stage was set for him to bring forth the more radical economic policy changes that he felt were needed. He presented the October Working Paper, which laid out the foundations of "Infitah," in April of 1974. This laid out the parameters of the open-door economic policy, putting into law measures that

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[114] Shimon Shamir, *Egypt From Monarchy to Republic: A Reassessment of Revolution and Change* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 74
[115] Aliboni, 19-21
[116] Aliboni, 26-27

further eased the way for foreign investment and for foreign companies setting up firms in Egypt.[117]

The economic changes set into motion by "Infitah" were wide-ranging. Foreign banks were invited to operate in Egypt, and to practice the full range of banking services, including even internal banking in Egypt.[118] Restrictions on the external and internal movement of workers were lifted, as were government mandates setting wages. Additionally, the high, extremely progressive taxes put in place during the Nasser years were lowered.[119] Foreigners were permitted to have complete ownership of private companies, and to own up to forty-nine percent of public ventures.[120] Foreigners were also invited to construct properties in Egypt. [121] Throughout the rest of his reign, Sadat continued to take provisions to move the country closer to an open-door capitalist economic system. In 1975, Egypt began to consult with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), in order to ensure its main creditors, the United States and Saudi Arabia, that it would accept IMF rules. In 1977, the Egyptian government, under pressure from the IMF, decided to eliminate subsidies on many food and consumer products, which led to the aforementioned Bread Riots. Because of the riots, Western and Arab countries decided to give aid regardless of whether subsidies were eliminated.

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[117] Aliboni, 24-27
[118] Mark N. Cooper, *The Transformation of Egypt* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1982), 94-96
[119] Cooper, 96-97
[120] Cooper, 99
[121] Cooper, 104

These riots point to the mixed effects of these sweeping economic policy changes on the economic welfare of various sectors of the population. On one hand, they did usher in unprecedented levels of growth. Foreign capital from Arab and Western countries flowed in, totaling nearly $20 billion. [122] GDP rose at an average annual rate of 8%, while consumption, employment, and real income also grew considerably.[123] Property development also grew exponentially, from $21 million Egyptian pounds in 1973 to $60 million Egyptian pounds in 1974.[124] However, the benefits of these economic advances were not evenly distributed throughout the population. The vast majority of the economic benefits accrued for the richest segments of the population.[125] Meanwhile, the lower and middle classes suffered because many of the safety nets and egalitarian measures from the Nasser era, such as guaranteed state employment for university graduates, the steep progressive tax, and income and price setting, were eliminated. Even for those Egyptians whose real income rose as a result of the economic revolution, the austerity measures and widening income gaps added to a feeling of economic insecurity. In the next chapter, I will look in more detail at how the Egyptian students were affected by these economic changes.

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[122] Aliboni, 26-32

[123] Nagy Eltony, ed., *Proceedings of the Expert group Meeting on Economic Diversification in the Arab World* (New York: United Nations, 2002), 190-195

[124] David Hirst and Irene Beeson, *Sadat* (London: Faber &Faber, 1981), 221

[125] Hirst and Beeson, 209

Chapter 6: Economic Changes Lead to Student Unrest

Students are an extremely important, yet uniquely difficult group to analyze vis-à-vis these economic changes. They are important because they comprise the future intellectuals, decision-makers and political leaders in Egypt. Moreover, they have, throughout Egyptian history, been a vocal and important political force. They played an important role in applying pressure on the British in the years before 1952, and in subsequent years, their numbers and influence only grew. However, the impact of economic policies on their welfare can be difficult to assess, because they are not yet employed in any specific industry. Analyzing this impact, then, requires a two-pronged approach. It necessitates, on one hand, analyzing how the various politics impacted their financial security as students. However, it is also important to analyze how these policies could impact the perception of students of their opportunities in the future. These perceptions impact levels of security felt by students and certainly play a large role in shaping their political opinions. In this section, I will address both of these parameters, and argue that "Infitah" marginalized and caused discontent in lower-middle and middle-class students because austerity measures made living costs grow, while Nasserist safety nets were removed, augmenting insecurity about the future, and class disparities were magnified.

Before beginning our analysis, it is important to understand the dramatic demographic shifts that occurred in the years before "Infitah" revolutionized Egyptian economics. The first university in Egypt was only officially established in 1925, in Cairo. In the first years, enrollment was very low. In 1930, there were

just 4, 247 students.[126] Throughout the next two decades, this university grew, and two new universities were established. By 1952, there were 42,444 Egyptian university students.[127] However, even then, the students who were able to attend university were largely elite upper-middle class students.[128] This all changed after Nasser took power. As previously mentioned, Nasser abolished university fees in 1961. This allowed many students from less privileged backgrounds to attend university. During Nasser's reign, the number of students attending university grew exponentially, and during Sadat's reign, it continued to grow at unprecedented rates. By the 1980-1981 school year, there were 536,750 university students.[129] Sadat took deliberate steps to encourage more lower-middle class students from provinces to attend university,. He did so because he believed these students, who were generally more pious and less likely to be leftists, would be a quietist antidote to politically active Nasserite students, who had had a stronghold over university campuses during the reign of Nasser.[130] Because of these measures, many students for whom university education was previously unthinkable were able to receive higher education. This was very significant to them, not just for economic mobility, but also for the prospect of social mobility. Egypt is a very class-conscious society. Receiving higher education and a white-collar middle class job not only enhanced the economic prospects of many students, but also enhanced their marriage

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[126] Erlich, 27
[127] Abdalla, 26
[128] Erlich, 25-40
[129] Erlich, 202
[130] Erlich, 202-206

prospects and social standing. Thus, many of these students from lower-class backgrounds entered university with high hopes, only to become disillusioned when goals that seemed within their reach became elusive. These were the same students who joined campus Islamist groups in great numbers in the years after Infitah. [131] Sadat's economic policies contributed to fostering this disillusionment for several reasons.

When many of these lower and lower-middle class students began their studies at Egyptian universities, they were confronted by nearly insurmountable hardships. These hardships were especially difficult for those students traveling from outside of the cities, who were leaving their homes and their families for the first time. Students were faced a number of obstacles to receiving their degrees. Classes were large, and often ineffective. All students that wanted more effective instruction were forced to employ expensive private tutors.[132] Furthermore, basic course materials such as textbooks were outdated, difficult to find, and expensive.[133] Sadat's economic liberalization policies only augmented the financial challenges faced by the less privileged students. Housing prices and prices of general goods rose, making it difficult for students living away from home, or with parents unable to support them.[134] In light of this, it is little wonder that so many students, when faced with the removal of subsidies on food and other consumer goods, took to the streets and rioted.

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[131] Ibrahim, 5-14

[132] Erlich, 204

[133] Abdalla, 221

[134] Shemu'el Even and Paul Rivlin, *Political Stability in Arab States: Economic Causes and Consequences* (Tel Aviv: Jafee Center for Strategic Studies, 2004), 42

Perhaps more important than the economic plight of students while attending university is the perception these students held of their future prospects. Most students knew, before they arrived at university, that they would have to endure some hardship in order to achieve their goals. However, "Infitah" made the futures of these students less secure. As previously mentioned, Nasser had implemented a policy in which all university graduates were guaranteed employment in the government bureaucracy. This policy was unsustainable in the long run, and counter to Sadat's economic goal of promoting a less bureaucratic state and a more open, free market economy. Sadat thus eliminated this policy.[135] While the government jobs guaranteed to students by the Nasser regime were generally underpaid, they did offer students a guarantee of middle class respectability. Eliminating this safety net added considerably to the anxieties that many students felt about the future. While "Infitah" did create a number of jobs, these jobs were confined to specific industries, and did not directly correlate with the qualifications of the increasing population of recent university graduates. As such, most still relied on connections or the government to find them jobs. Indeed, a 1981 study showed that the majority of Egyptian graduates who did find jobs did so with the government.[136] This lethal combination of economic hardship in the present and uncertainty about the future led many to revolt.

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[135] Thomas W. Lippman, *Egypt After Nasser: Sadat, Peace, and the Mirage of Prosperity* (New York: Paraon House, 1989), 68-71
[136] George Psacharopoulos and Vikas C. Sanyal, *Higher Education and Employment: The IIEP Experience in Five Less Developed Countries* (Paris: Unesco, International Institute for Educational Planning, 1981), 32

Exasperating this frustration was the fact that, as a result of "Infitah," the income gap in Egypt became wider and more visible.[137] Furthermore, "Infitah" resulted in the flooding of the market with foreign goods.[138] This created ample opportunities for more affluent students to flaunt their wealth. This was extremely offensive to the pious, provincial lower-middle class students, and it added insult to the injury inflicted by their economic woes. This change happened suddenly, because during the Nasser years, many restrictions were put in place governing the import of foreign goods.[139] Sadat himself exemplified this trend of the affluent flaunting their wealth. He was known for throwing lavish parties with foreign dignitaries, having multiple ostentatious residences, and his fashionable Western clothes. His wife was known for her array of expensive jewels and her Westernized appearance. Consequently, President Sadat and his wife Jehan faced condemnation by many Egyptians and were derided as symbols of wealth and corruption.[140] This phenomenon of ostentatious wealth juxtaposed with poverty eroded the hopes and exacerbated the frustrations felt by those students who could not afford basic necessities and school supplies. This undoubtedly led many of them to take political action to oppose the Sadat regime.

Thus, the economic changes brought about by "Infitah" exacerbated discontent and fostered political opposition among university students for several

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[137] Kirk J. Beattie, *Egypt During the Sadat Years* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 153
[138] Anouk De Konig, *Class, Gender, and Public Space in Cosmopolitan Cairo* (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 2009), 21
[139] Raymond William Baker, *Egypt's Uncertain revolution Under Nasser and Sadat* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978)
[140] Henry S. Bienin and Mark Gersovitz, "Consumer Subsidy Cuts, Violence, and Political Stability," *Comparative Politics* 19 (October 1986): 32-33

reasons. New policies increasing access to higher education combined with Nasserist egalitarian economic policies raised the expectations of lower class students regarding their prospects of achieving upward economic and social mobility. However, when they arrived at university, they were struck by insurmountable financial difficulties, and few opportunities for the future. The ever-widening and more visible gap between rich and poor students made these problems even more incendiary. This synergy of high expectations and harsh realities has produced revolts in other countries, the most salient example being Iran during the same time period. Mohammed Reza Shah expanded education and implemented economic modernization policies as part of his White Revolution of 1963.[141] In the subsequent years, discontent over income disparity and lack of opportunities led many students to become politically active. Students played a major role in the Islamic Revolution of 1979, led by Imam Khomeini.[142] These experiences show the perilous nature of rapid economic and education reforms. While it may not always be the case, it is evident that sudden changes in economic policy can have a highly destabilizing effect on the student sector.

This certainly seems to have been the case in Egypt during the 1970s. Sadat's "Infitah" policies brought about a number of radical changes in the lives of university students. Many of these changes were undoubtedly positive, but

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[141] Morris Mottale, *Iran: The Political Sociology of the Islamic Revolution* (Tel Aviv: Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 1987), 6-22
[142] For accounts of the participants in the Revolution, see David Menashri, *Iran: A Decade of War and Revolution* (New York : Holmes & Meier, 1990); Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); and John D. Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981)

some also proved to be destabilizing. More students than ever before were able to receive a higher education, and to harbor hopes of upward economic and social mobility. However, the economic policy changes also exacerbated the hardships faced by many less affluent university students. The austerity measures put in place made making ends meet more difficult for these students. Additionally, when the safety nets promising all university graduates government jobs were removed, students were confronted by minimal job prospects. The frustration engendered by these developments was exacerbated by an ever-widening and more visible income gap. These factors contributed to a sense of disillusionment and desperation felt by any students. Islamist and other reactionary groups were able to harness these feelings of despair to increase their support, by offering a supportive community and helping their members in material ways. As a result, Islamist opposition reached unprecedented levels on university campuses in Egypt during this time.

Part IV. Sadat's Legitimacy Gap and Students

Chapter 7: Leadership Style and Legitimacy

Rapid and dramatic policy shifts were not the only factors that had a destabilizing effect on society and catalyzed student revolts. Changes in leadership style between Sadat and his predecessor, Gamel Abdel Nasser, had equally reverberant effect son society in Egypt. While Nasser excelled at sweeping ideological rhetoric and his policies were marked by ideological consistency, Sadat was prone to self-contradiction and his actions often undercut his words. Unlike Nasser, he lacked a clear mission. In this section, I will look at reasons Sadat's persona failed to ingratiate with him students, and reasons it inspired student revolts.

Before beginning our analysis, it is important to understand theories of legitimacy and stability. In this chapter, I will look at some of the most salient theories of legitimacy and its implications on a society's stability. I will pay particular attention to theorists who focus of legitimacy in the context of the Middle East.

In order to understand these theories of legitimacy, one must have a working definition of legitimate authority. Max Weber is arguably the most influential theorist of power and legitimacy, and his thoughts on the subject can shed light upon the conundrum that Sadat faced. In his seminal lecture, "Politics as a Vocation," Weber defines the state as "a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a

given territory."[143] For a state to operate as a mechanism to ensure the smooth operation of society, it must have a "monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force."[144] Weber claims that the state is necessarily a relationship of men dominating other men, and that it is thus reliant on the dominated accepting the authority of those dominating them. This acceptance is contingent on the degree of legitimacy of the authority.

According to Weber, there are three types of legitimate authority. The three types of legitimate authority are traditional authority, charismatic authority, and rational authority. Traditional authority gains its legitimacy from ancient rites that are accepted by an entire community, as with tribal leadership. Charismatic authority, on the other hand, derives its legitimacy from the unique qualities of individual leaders, qualities such as "revelation, heroism, or other qualities of individual leadership."[145] Finally, rational authority derives its legitimacy from established rules that are widely considered valid. Most Western democracies are founded upon rational authority, while the legitimacy of many leaders in the contemporary Middle East is based largely on charismatic authority.

In addition to looking at general theories of power and legitimacy, it is helpful to look at scholarship on how these concepts relate to the Middle East. Much has been written on the Middle East's resistance to democracy and about

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143 Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. Hans Heinrich Gerth and Charles Wright Mills (Oxon: Routeledge, 1948), 77-128
144 Weber, 77-128
145 Weber, 77-128

the unique struggles facing leaders there.[146] Lisa Anderson cogently discusses

the matter in her article, "The State in the Middle East and North Africa."

Anderson accepts the Weberian definition of the state, but notes that in the

Middle East, there often exist ambiguities. She claims that one of the most

important factors to keep in mind when thinking about the Middle East is the

strength or weakness of a state. A state is "strong" if its administrative structures

are well established and stable. A state is "weak" if it is unable to provide

services and extract resources from a major part of the population, and is marked

by patrimonial patterns of recruitment and operations.[147] She notes that often,

weak states are the most repressive, while strong states do not need to resort to

violence in attempts to control its citizens.

Finally, it is important to look at what determines the strength or

weakness of a state in the Middle East. Patently, there are a number of factors,

including institutions, history, populations, and the education level, and

socioeconomic status of a populace, which determine a state's legitimacy.

However, an interesting pattern in the Middle East is that often, the individual

characteristics of a leader play a disproportionate role in determining the strength

of a state. Middle Eastern history is marked with strong personalities and

Weberian charismatic leaders. These leaders are relied upon to outline the

purpose and set the agenda of the state, and people look to them as a

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[146] Nazih N. Ayubi, *Overstating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1995); Roger Owen, *State, Power, and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East* (London: Routledge, 2004); Augustus Richard Norton, ed., *Civil Society in the Middle East* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995)
[147] Lisa Anderson, "The State in the Middle East and North Africa," *Comparative Politics* 20 (October 1987):2

personification of the state. John Waterbury poses interesting points about the factors determining the legitimacy of leaders in the Middle East. He claims that the legitimacy of individual leaders is contingent upon whether they have articulated a sacred mission or telos, and whether the population of the state has accepted this mission.[148] Mohammed Haikal, the former editor-in-chief of the prominent Egyptian newspaper "Al Ahram" expresses similar sentiments in his book *Autumn of Fury*. He states that in the Third World, legitimacy is usually contingent on a strong bureaucracy, which provides stability, and a compelling personality at the helm.[149] If the personality of the leader fails to capture popular imagination, a legitimacy gap will ensue. Indeed, if we look at the history of the Middle East, a strong, charismatic leader with a sacred, resonant mission is a salient feature of most of the strongest, most secure regimes.

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[148] John Waterbury, "Democracy Without Democrats?: The Potential for Political Liberalization in the Middle East," in *Democracy Without Democrats: The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World*, ed. Ghassan Salame (London: I.B. Tauris, 1994), 23-47
[149] Mohammed Heikal, *Autumn of Fury* (New York: Random House, 1983)

Chapter 8: Sadat's Failure to Pave a Clear Mission

Sadat's speeches and writings display his failure to pave a clear mission and his tendency to appear hypocritical. In these speeches, he alienates potential followers by using Islamic rhetoric to justify policies that most felt were antithetical to Islam. He would emphasize his peasant roots while indulging in excessive displays of wealth. In this chapter, I will look at ways his speeches undercut his legitimacy.

If one analyzes Sadat's speeches, one notices a number of recurring themes, which often contradict one another. In some ways this reflects Sadat's inherent style, which was grandiose and prone to inconsistency. However, it also reflects the myriad challenges that he faced. In trying to address every challenge in his various speeches, he ended up trumpeting different, sometimes contradicting themes.

In the early years of his presidency, Sadat faced a two-pronged challenge. He had to show respect for Nasser, and co-opt or neutralize Nasserites who could threaten his legitimacy. At the same time, he had to step out of Nasser's shadow, and earn the mandate to chart his own course.[150] To do so, he simultaneously paid homage to Nasser in his speeches, while subtly distancing himself from him and critiquing him. He uses religious imagery and symbols to attempt to carve out his own identity and mission. In this section, I will look at the ways attempted to achieve these disparate goals, and the ways they resulted in contradictions.

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[150] Israeli, 45-60

At the onset of his presidency, Sadat was most focused with extricating himself from Nasser's shadow, while reassuring Nasserites of his loyalty. In the beginning, he took great pains to emphasize his devotion to the principles of Nasserism.[151] In one of his first speeches, about one month after taking power, Sadat attempted to ratchet support for his foreign policy by declaring, "In the name of Allah, we shall start our march to honor Nasser and his principles..." He followed this proclamation with a recitation from the Koran.[152] He expressed support for pan-Arabism frequently in the beginning. In one speech in Cairo on April 1971, proclaiming the draft agreement of the Confederation of Arab republics, he declared, "This is a great step along the path of unity for our Arab nation, a magnificent consolidation—appreciated by this nation—helping it wage the struggle of destiny whose challenges it is facing, and in honor of the martyrs and heroes who waged the battles of this nation throughout its glorious history of struggle for liberty, socialism, and unity, and in realization of a great hope, for which the hero of this nation, Gamel Abdel Nasser, worked and died."[153] During this period, Sadat spoke of Nasser in glowing terms. In one speech, Sadat refers to Nasser as "a martyr of the most glorious martyrs of this nation and the champion of its cherished heroes and

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[151] Israeli, 54
[152] Anwar Al-Sadat, Speech, October 18, 1970, in *The Public Diary of President Sadat*, edited by Raphael Israeli (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978-1979), 10
[153] Anwar Al-Sadat, "Statement to the Nation," speech, Cairo, 17 April 1971. In *Speeches by President Anwar Al-Sadat* (Cairo: Ministry of Information State Information Service, 1971-1978)

fighters."[154] With grandiose statements such as these, Sadat makes a forceful case that the "destiny" of Egypt, his telos, is to follow the principles of Nasserism and Arab Socialism.

At the same time that he was reassuring the populace of his undying devotion to Nasserism, Sadat took steps to undercut Nasser's legacy and bolster support for his own, radically different, agenda. Sadat increasingly began to beseech Egyptians to leave Nasser's memory in the past, and to carve out his own identity. A primary method he used to differentiate himself from Nasser was through the use of religious rhetoric. In his address following his election as President of Egypt, he employed Allah to implore Egyptians to give him their support and let go of Nasser. He said, "I am fully confident, and my confidence rests on my belief in Allah and the people, that you will all lend me support....Our hopes are manifold. The realization of our hopes...necessitates the totality of the nation...Allah, blessed be He, whose deeds are beyond scrutiny, wishes to test our perseverance by that which is dearest and most sublime to us... Nasser himself had warned against the nation's relying upon one single [person]...."[155] In this historic speech, he defers to Allah in order to both show his respect for Nasser, while beseeching the polity to get behind him and leave Nasser's memory in the past.

As Sadat's presidency progressed, and he became more confident, he became increasingly critical of Nasser. Sadat's memoirs, which were

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[154] Anwar Al-Sadat, Speech, September 28, 1973; in the online Sadat archives of the Bibliothecca Alexandrina, http://sadat.bibalex.org
[155] Anwar Al-Sadat, Speech, October 18, 1970, in *The Public Diary of President Sadat*, edited by Raphael Israeli (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978-1979), 10

published in 1978, reveal an extremely critical attitude towards Nasser. In the memoirs, he assaults Nasser's mental health, stating that, "There were times, during the eighteen years of our collaboration, when I could not understand [Nasser] or accept his actions; but the love I bore him never diminished. He, on the other hand, had been in the grip of 'complexes' since childhood and was often motivated by them; and he, as well as many of his entourage, suffered as a result... Anxiety gnawed continually at his heart, as he regarded everybody with suspicion, whatever a man's real position was."[156] In these memoirs, Sadat made remarks implying that the defeat in the 1967 War against Israel came about because of Nasser's stubbornness and distrusting nature. He wrote, "It was this [tendency of Nasser to be distrusting and irrational] that made the July Revolution, for all its achievements, steer Egypt on a disastrous course culminating in the 1967 defeat which very nearly blotted out all our earlier achievements."[157] During this later part of his presidency, Sadat frequently made self-congratulatory comparisons between himself and Nasser.[158] He often used Nasser as a scapegoat, and purported to be saving the nation from the problems caused by Nasser.

There was a parallel shift in the ideals and policies Sadat advocated in his speeches throughout his presidency. In the beginning, he praised Nasserist ideals, such as Socialism, friendship with the Soviet Union and animosity towards the West and Israel. In a speech during this period, he

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156 Anwar Al-Sadat, *In Search of Identity* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 77
157Anwar Al-Sadat, *In Search of Identity* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 103
158 Heikal, 272

lambasted the United States for "providing Israel with weapons" and proclaimed that, "our basic friend in the battle is the Soviet Union."[159] In a 1972 speech, he powerfully articulated a philosophy that shared much with Nasserism. He stated that, "between us and the Soviet Union, we share not only interest, but something more valuable than interest, which is the principle of hostility to colonialism and resistance, and the rejection of the capitalist mode of development, and the belief that freedom is indivisible, that prosperity is indivisible."[160] In 1972, he accused the United States of waging a "psychological war" with its activities in Vietnam.[161] His statements echoed those made by Nasser during his presidency.

However, as his presidency progressed, Sadat began to lean more and more towards the West and to move further from the principles of Nasserism in both his policies and his public addresses. After the October War, when it looked as if he could secure United States support, and after which he felt more secure, he increasingly began to praise the United States. In a 1974 speech, on the occasion of a visit by United States President Nixon to Egypt, Sadat offered him effusive praise. He proclaimed, "I believe that statesmen of the caliber of President Nixon are able, with good intentions and honest decisions, to meet the

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[159] Anwar Al-Sadat, Speech, January 25, 1972, in the online Sadat archives of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, http://sadat.bibalex.org
[160] Anwar Al-Sadat, Speech, February 16, 1972, in the online Sadat archives of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, http://sadat.bibalex.org
[161] Anwar Al-Sadat, Speech, February 16, 1972, in the online Sadat archives of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, http://sadat.bibalex.org

challenge [of establishing peace in the Middle East.]"[162] At the same time, he began to criticize the Soviet Union. In one speech, he proclaimed, "If the U.S.S.R is anxious to preserve her image in the Arab world, she must meet her commitment according to the Egyptian-Soviet treaty. This Treaty does not cause any embarrassment to me; does it embarrass them? Why do they not honor it?"[163] For the remainder of his presidency, he repeated this theme of the Soviet Union deserting Egypt and the United States becoming a friend and instrumental partner in securing peace and prosperity in the Middle East.

Even more controversially, his rhetoric on Israel shifted dramatically. After years of reviling Israel, this began to slowly shift after the October War, when Egypt was perceived as defeating Israel. It culminated in 1979, when he signed a peace treaty with Israel. On this occasion, he declared that Egypt and Israel were about to "enter into a new era of love and brotherhood," and that "finally, after much effort, the cousins would be able to renew the glories of the past, by living together side by side in peace and harmony."[164]

These shifts in policy and rhetoric were intrinsically shocking to many Egyptians. However, one of the most striking aspects of these shifts is the way Sadat would justify them in his public addresses. He often did so through Islamic rhetoric. Islam was an enormous component of Sadat's public identity.

[162] Anwar Al-Sadat, Speech, June 12, 1974, in *The Public Diary of President Sadat,* edited by Raphael Israeli (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978-1979), 566
[163] Anwar Al-Sadat, Speech, January 14, 1975, in *The Public Diary of President Sadat,* edited by Raphael Israeli (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978-1979), 766
[164] Anwar Al-Sadat, Speech, March 27, 1979, in the online Sadat archives of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, http://sadat.bibalex.org

Newspapers referred to him as the "pious president."[165] He was personally a

pious person, but he also found Islam as a useful tool to counteract the leftists,

who he believed posed the greatest threat to his presidency.[166] He constantly

emphasized his piousness and peasant roots in his speeches. In one speech, he

claims his policies are guided by what "is true of faith, which I knew and learned

from the village."[167] Furthermore, he deferred to Islamic rhetoric to try to gain

support for his most controversial policies. For example, upon announcing the

highly polarizing peace treaty with Israel, he announced, "Today I turn to every

mother, every wife and sister of a martyr, to all of our martyrs, I come to them …

And say that the sacrifices of our heroes and martyrs were not in vain."[168] He

also used faith to discredit his enemies and critics, including the Islamists. In one

speech, he cautions that "the most dangerous person… is half the learner [who]

takes a verse from the Koran and interprets it as he pleases."[169] This was a

veiled attack against his Islamist critics. He attacked heroes of radical Islam and

others he considered enemies such as the Ayatollah Khomeini by assaulting their

Islamic credentials. For example, he proclaimed that, "Khomeini's style is not the

style of Islam."[170] In doing so, he crafted a new ruling philosophy unprecedented

in Egypt. He supported Westernization and peace with Israel, and breaking from

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[165] Gerges, 46

[166] Raymond William Baker, *Sadat and After: Struggles for Egypt's Political Soul* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 247

[167] Anwar Al-Sadat, Speech, November 13, 1977, in the online Sadat archives of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, http://sadat.bibalex.org

[168] Anwar Al-Sadat, Speech, March 29, 1979, in the online Sadat archives of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, http://sadat.bibalex.org

[169] Anwar Al-Sadat, Speech, October 19. 1977, in the online Sadat archives of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, http://sadat.bibalex.org

[170] Anwar Al-Sadat, *Those I Have Known* (London: Cape, 1985), 36

Egypt's socialist past using Islamic rhetoric and justifications. In the next section, I will look at why these efforts, along with his efforts to appear loyal to Nasser while criticizing his legacy, largely failed.

Chapter 9: Sadat's Leadership Failure

Despite a number of factors in his favor, Sadat failed to win the hearts and minds of most of the Egyptian populace, and especially alienated the students. As previously detailed, there were a number of disturbances during his reign, both on and off campuses, and he had a pained relationship with much of the Egyptian populace. Sadat was one of the core figures of the 1952 Free Officers Revolution, was credited with victory in the 1973 October War against Israel, and was a powerful speaker. Nevertheless, he managed to alienate many members of his core constituencies. He failed to play by the rules established in the Middle East for gaining support, and was prone to self-contradiction, and public displays of hypocrisy. Consequently, he inadvertently dealt some fatal blows to his legitimacy, which ended up being his downfall.

In order to understand why students rejected Sadat's image and persona, it is important to look at a broad picture. It is instructive to look at his impressions on the general populace, and to look outside of Egypt for guidance.

Looking at other autocratic Middle Eastern leaders who were more successful in consolidating support can help in understanding why Sadat failed to do so. Sadat's predecessor Gamel Abdel Nasser provides a good example of a leader who managed to secure the support of much of the Egyptian population for most of his reign. He maintained this high level of legitimacy by constantly reinforcing his core message of Arab Socialism. In his speeches, he constantly resounded the themes of pan-Arabism, pan-Africanism, Socialism, and anti-imperialism. In this narrative, the United States, Britain, and Israel were

consistently the enemies and responsible for Egypt's ills. Because he maintained a consistent narrative and message, Nasser's mission was clear. Consequently, he was a popular leader who maintained a high level of legitimacy throughout his rule.[171]

Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini provides another good example of a highly popular charismatic leader. Khomeini had a vastly different ideology than Nasser did, but his grip on his people and his techniques share some similarities with those of Nasser. Khomeini's ideology was that of radical Shiite pan-Islam, with a populist streak. In his speeches, he constantly reinforced the themes of anti-imperialism, the hypocrisy of the West, anti-corruption, and the superiority of Islamic rule. Like Nasser, there were consistent enemies in his narrative. The primary enemies on who Khomeini blamed Iran's ills were the West, the United States, the Soviet Union, Israel, and the Shah of Iran. Both Khomeini and Nasser emphasized that, through their respective missions, they could regain the dignity of their respective countries. By having a constant narrative with a compelling mission with clear-cut heroes and villains, Khomeini and Nasser gained widespread support and high levels of legitimacy.[172]

The success of these leaders elucidates some of the reasons for Sadat's failure to secure legitimacy. Unlike the narratives evoked by Nasser and Khomeini's speeches, which were highly consistent, Sadat's narrative was

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[171] R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Egypt Under Nasir: A Study in Political Dynamics* (London : State University of New York Press, 1972)

[172] See Ervand Abrahamian, *Khomeinism: Essays on the Islamic Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) and Baqer Moin. *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999) for incisive discussions about the roots of Khomeini's appeal.

constantly changing. Unlike these leaders, Sadat failed to establish a single

coherent mission. Through his words, he often contradicted himself unwittingly.

Ismail Fahmy, the former Foreign Minister under Sadat, who resigned in 1977 in

protest of Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, wrote in his memoirs that, "without realizing

it, [Sadat] had the habit of regularly making contradictory statements."[173] As

detailed in the previous section, he would pay lip service to Nasser's legacy while

both subtly and overtly undercutting it. Mohamed Haikal wrote that he expressly

advised Sadat against doing this, as his initial legitimacy rested upon being

Nasser's rightful successor.[174] Rather than helping to gradually steer the country

away from Nasserism, as Sadat had hoped, it made him appear disingenuous.

Furthermore, it added fuel to the fire of critics who claimed that he had "sold out"

to the West. Sadat's professed support of the leftist causes of Socialism, anti-

Americanism, and anti-Zionism seemed increasingly hypocritical and

disingenuous, as he would increasingly express contradictory sentiments and

pursue contradictory policies. Thus, he opened himself up to charges of

duplicity, insincerity, and hypocrisy, and leftists were able to expropriate this

mission.

Given the active steps Sadat took to undermine Nassrism, his

alienation of leftists was unsurprising. However, Sadat's alienation of Islamists

took the president himself by surprise. From the outset, he referred to himself as

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[173] Ismail Fahmi, *Negotiating For Peace in the Middle East* (London: Croom Helm, 1983)
[174] Heikal, 272

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"the pious president."[175] He started off his presidency by freeing many members of the Muslim Brotherhood, who had been imprisoned by Nasser.[176] He peppered his speeches with Islamic references and allusions. However, he undermined this image he was cultivating by using Islamic pleas to justify his support for policies that were very unpopular to many devout Muslims, and to most involved in radical Islamist groups. As discussed in the preceding chapter, Sadat used Islam to validate and gain support for his own policies of economic liberalization, ties with the United States, and peace with Israel. When dealing with opponents, he would question their faith, calling them "atheists."[177] Meanwhile, he would support figures and causes unpopular in the Islamist movements, such as Mohammed Reza Shah of Iran, United States President Richard Nixon, and United States Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.[178] The Egyptian population had become increasingly pious since the defeat in 1967, so evoking Islam in speeches was ostensibly a prudent course. However, by using Islam to justify policies and individuals that were anathema to many Muslims, he further alienated the devout section of his base and became increasingly vulnerable to charges of hypocrisy.

Thus, Sadat was unsuccessful in evoking either leftism or Islamism as a uniting, resounding mission to help secure his legitimacy. Furthermore, his evocation of multiple, sometimes conflicting messages, diluted any overall

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[175] Gerges, 46
[176] John Waterbury, *The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat: The Political Economy of Two Regimes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 349-353
[177] Heikal, 276
[178] Anwar Al-Sadat, *Those I Have Known* (London: Cape, 1985)

themes. His constant vacillations between anti-Westernism and Westernism and anti-Nasserism and Nasserism, and his usage of Islamic rhetoric in order to champion causes seen as anti-Islamic not only eroded away at his base of support, but made him seem duplicitous and hypocritical. Furthermore, his actions added to the perception that he was hypocritical.

The growing importance of television added to Sadat's woes. During Sadat's reign, television became more ubiquitous. More than any other president in Egypt before him, he found that he was under an intense microscope. Every action, word or gaffe could be instantly broadcast to all sectors of the population. These technological advances presented him with the opportunity to present a clear, compelling message and attempt to regain the relative cohesiveness and sense of purpose that had prevailed until the War of 1967. However, it also presented potential traps. Any hypocrisy, inconsistency, or slip of the tongue could be overblown and have startling reverberations. Mohamed Haikal described Sadat's problems, writing, "Sadat's trouble was that, though he was in so many ways a child of the television age, he could not resist the temptation to overdo it."[179] One example of this is the student riots of 1972, which were ignited after Sadat, in a speech on January 13, 1972, attributed his unwillingness to go to war with Israel to the outbreak of the Indo-Pakistani War. He claimed that having two ongoing wars would compromise the ability of the Soviet Union to aid Egypt, and that the United States might intervene. The *Times* correspondent in Egypt remarked, "Even the most ardent supporter of President

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[179] Heikal, 6

Sadat will admit that his excuse….[for] cancellation of a planned December attack into Sinai was a tactical blunder…It carried an anxious and impatient audience beyond toleration point."[180] Because Sadat sometimes failed to gauge the full impact of his words, his presentation to the Egyptian masses was often unappealing.

Furthermore, the advent of television meant fiery words were not enough: every action, no matter how benign, could be inflated and used to undercut a leader's legitimacy. Sadat and his wife, who flaunted their affluence and Western values and moors, could be easily mocked, especially due to his fiery rhetoric about his peasant roots. Sadat's wife, Jehan Sadat, came under much fire for her ostentatious dress and liberal values.[181] Like her husband the President, she was oblivious to the effect these actions had on their perception by many Egyptians.[182] In addition, Sadat was broadcast hobnobbing with Western leaders, sipping champagne. He was seen as idolizing America and American culture.[183] As a result, Sadat and his wife were the targets of a great deal of mockery and derision.[184] Not only did these things subject Sadat to mockery, but they added to the perception that he was a hypocritical, unprincipled despot.

With no segment of society was this truer than with the students. Students throughout the world have historically been one of the most idealistic

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[180] Abdalla, 178
[181] Desmond Meiring, *Fire of Islam* (London: Wildwood House, 1982), 176
[182] Jehan Sadat, *A Woman of Egypt* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987)
[183] David Hirst and Irene Beeson, *Sadat* (London: Faber and Faber, 1981), 342-348
[184] Abdalla, 178

and politicized groups, with an attuned awareness of justice and a hatred of hypocrisy. If one looks at student movements in America, Europe, or Iran, this is a common theme. In Egypt, with its rich history of student activism, this was particularly the case. Thus, Sadat's inconsistency and his seemingly opportunistic employment of populist and Islamic themes to justify pro-Western policies made his persona anathema to many students. Images of his affluent lifestyle and close relations with prominent Westerners only added to these perceptions. Radical leftist and particularly Islamist student movements became even more appealing to discontented students because they offered the clear ideology that the Sadat regime lacked. As such, these groups gained membership while the Sadat regime became increasingly maligned on university campuses.

Conclusion

The reasons for the explosive rise in campus militancy during the Sadat era are multifaceted. Some of these factors were largely out of Sadat's control. The embattled president inherited massive structural instability, debeilitating poverty, the legacy of a country with a history of colonialism, sweeping and frequent policy changes, and upheavals every generation. However, in this inquiry, I have focused on the factors Sadat could control which fanned the flames of the campus uprisings: destabilizing, rapid changes in university ad economic policy, and Sadat's unpopular political style and lack of unifying ethos. While Nasser managed to contain uprisings until the very end of his presidency through inspiring speeches and a mix of egalitarian and repressive policies, Sadat failed to do so.

One of the main reasons for the discontent on campuses during the Sadat era was that the changes to university policy that he and his predecessor instituted were implemented too hastily, and were therefore destabilizing. The university system was expanded dramatically, with inadequate consideration of how the universities and the economy would absorb these students. The university and economic infrastructure was unable to absorb many of these students, particularly the ones from the least advantaged backgrounds. The result was mass disillusionment, anger, and crises of identity among many students. These factors were catalysts for the massive Islamist resurgence. The expansion caused a demographic shift in the composition of student bodies, which Sadat actively encouraged. This shift resulted in greatly increased numbers of lower middle class students from rural areas on campuses. Many of

the new rural and lower middle class students became disillusioned with

academic deficiencies and lack of opportunities, and were attracted to Islamist

groups. Furthermore, Sadat's encouragement of campus freedoms removed a

barrier to militant activism. Sadat believed that by encouraging mass education

and freedom, he could win support and stability. However, these far-reaching,

radical changes proved destabilizing and paved the way for the massive campus

political movements that ensued.

Another primary catalyst for the radical activity on campuses, and one

related to the education policy changes, is the economic changes that came

about during Sadat's presidency. The economic policy changes exacerbated the

hardships faced by many less affluent university students. The austerity

measures put in place made making ends meet more difficult for these students.

Additionally, when the safety nets promising all university graduates government

jobs were removed, students were confronted by minimal job prospects. The

frustration engendered by these developments was exacerbated by an ever-

widening and more visible income gap. These factors contributed to a sense of

disillusionment and desperation felt by any students. Islamist and other

reactionary groups were able to harness these feelings of despair to increase

their support, by offering a supportive community and helping their members in

material ways. As a result, Islamist opposition reached a fever pitch on university

campuses in Egypt.

Finally, Sadat's public image exacerbated the rage felt by many university

students. Sadat often contradicted himself and appeared excessively

hypocritical to many Egyptians. He lacked a clear, rousing mission to inspire his citizens. While it would seem that Sadat did seem to have a clear mission of Westernizing and modernizing Egypt, he failed to gain support for this mission. He undercut the support he may have been able to attain by expressing sentiments and ideologies that contradicted each other. He expressed support for Arab Socialism and Nasserism in some speeches, and denigrated them in other speeches. He used Islamic rhetoric to trumpet values and policies that were repugnant to Islamists. His actions, captured by the media, often seemed to be counter to his professed values. As such, he was seen as weak and hypocritical, and alienated himself from many potential supporters. Unlike his predecessor Nasser, Sadat lacked a clear, concrete, and popular mission. As such, his persona, as well as his politics, alienated many, especially on university campuses.

The common thread of all of these factors is that they all involved precipitous transitions that destabilized the country. Egypt had, throughout its modern history, experienced so many changes in policies and regimes that it was already very fragile. The rapid-fire changes implemented by Sadat were a tipping pint that brought about mass disillusionment and facilitated radical activities.

Nasser and Sadat's education policies swiftly caused many to be able to get a university education. However, the universities and the economy were not prepared to absorb these new university students. The rapidly implemented policy changes caused the expectations of many Egyptian university students to

suddenly rise. When confronted by harsh conditions upon entering universities

and a difficult job market, many students turned to radical groups.

Likewise, the economic policy implemented by Sadat changed the

economic and opportunity structures too dramatically and too quickly. All of a

sudden, egalitarian measures such as guaranteed government jobs after

graduation and subsidies were lifted. This made day-to-day life much more

difficult for less affluent university students, and removed the promise of a

brighter future. These changes also gave the affluent new, instant ways to flaunt

their wealth through the influx of foreign goods. These changes were a shock to

many who were already feeling lost and disillusioned.

Finally, the change in rhetoric and ideology between Nasser and Sadat,

while less tangible than the aforementioned factors, was equally destabilizing.

Nasser had excelled in soaring, inspirational rhetoric. Sadat, however,

trumpeted policies unpopular with university students. Many found him to be

duplicitous and hypocritical. This was the final straw for university students. The

poorer students found themselves in personally unfavorable situations, and

moreover, found that they were suddenly without an inspirational leader to stoke

their national pride.

The dramatic shifts were destabilizing and led to a near-revolution during

the Sadat era. The uprisings mirrored those during the pre-revolution era, which

led to Egypt gaining its independence. They also foreshadowed the events which

recently took place and which led to the end of Mubarak's three-decade rule.

This uprising, the most massive since 1952, dwarfed those that took place during

the Sadat era. This is unsurprising given that many of the students' grievances from the Sadat era remained unaddressed after his untimely assassination. Egypt's economy has only become more globalized since then, and universities continued to breed disenchanted graduates with few prospects for stable employment. So once again, this generation saw a large-scale, youth-led expression of discontent.

While Mubarak and the regime instituted by the 1952 Free Officers revolution has been toppled, the widespread poverty and instability are more rampant than ever. Egypt's next president will face the formidable task of promoting stability and prosperity. Sadat's experience, coupled with the recent revolution, shows that when these problems are allowed to fester in Egypt, uprisings are nearly inevitable.

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